

A CODE OF ETHICS
for Minister Members of Kiskiminetas Presbytery
(a presbytery of the Presbyterian Church USA)

Fundamental Principles

All continuing members of Kiskiminetas Presbytery (hereafter referred to as “ministers”) have the responsibility to trust Jesus Christ as Savior, to acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and to believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are further committed to obedience to Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by the Book of Confessions. In their personal lives all ministers of Word and Sacrament, acting as God’s servants, follow the Lord Jesus Christ. In both their personal and professional lives they strive to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church, and serve God with honesty, intelligence, imagination, and love.

Introduction to “A Code of Ethics”

There are two aspects to “A Code of Ethics” -- ministers as *persons*, and ministers as *professionals*. Both aspects are concerns for the whole church and have a direct relationship to effectiveness in the practice of ministry in **the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

Ministers as Persons

Ministers have the same rights, needs, and gifts as all of God’s people, such as privacy, freedom, rest and recreation, and will, therefore:

work toward a balance between time at work and private time, as well as time with family and friends, recognizing the need for intimacy, dependence and praise.

seek therapeutic help when necessary. (This would include, but not be limited to: family problems, alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual misconduct, compulsive behaviors, burnout . . .)

show sensible regard for the moral, social and religious standards of the Christian community at large, realizing that any violation may be damaging to the Body of Christ.

appropriate opportunities for physical, spiritual and educational renewal.

act as responsible stewards of the many talents given to them by God.

Ministers as Professionals

Ministers through devotion to their calling give glory to Christ and bring honor to the whole church. Their ethical responsibilities as persons “set apart” by the church fall into three categories: *fundamental professional practices, pastor/parishioner relationships, and colleague relationships*.

Fundamental Professional Practices

Ministers as servants of the Lord and his church will therefore:

exercise the power and privileges of their office and positions of responsibility they hold in a judicious manner

cultivate hours for prayer and spiritual enrichment

engage in educational experiences for professional growth and development.

act in such a manner as to uphold and enhance the honor, integrity, morality, and dignity of the office.

limit their practice of ministry to those positions and responsibilities for which they are qualified and refer when necessary.

conduct themselves in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest.

reflect the principle that service to our Lord is primary and remuneration secondary to the practice of ministry.

Pastor/Parishioner Relationships

Ministers protect the well-being of those with whom they work or serve. They will therefore: *guard* against intrusions into the lives of individuals with whom they have dealings and shall not disclose confidences to anyone except when:

- a. required to do so by law
- b. disclosure is consented to by the person communicating confidences, which consent is normally given in writing.
- c. disclosure is necessary to prevent the person from harming himself or herself or others. Harmful behavior is that which is a violation of law or poses a threat to the physical well-being of the self or others.
- d. disclosure is necessary to defend a minister against claims made by a person who asserts that particular communications related to the claim were made in confidence.

maintain appropriate boundaries in all interactions with parishioners so that no boundary crossings or boundary violations lead to or represent evidence of sexual misconduct. Sexual abuse, harassment, misconduct will not be tolerated. Allegations of sexual abuse, harassment, misconduct will be processed in accord with the Rules of Discipline in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Colleague Relationships

Ministers nurture cordial associations with their colleagues in ministry and with colleagues in related professions - health care, social services, legal services and the like. They will therefore:

respect the integrity and protect the welfare of colleagues both active and honorably retired.

maintain all relationships with colleagues on a professional basis, refraining from disparagement and avoiding emotional, sexual or any other form of exploitation.

seek to enhance, not degrade, the reputations of colleagues.

strive to challenge prejudicial discrimination on the basis of sex, race, age, disability, marital status, or on any other unfair basis.

honor the provisions in the Book of Order in relation to their duties and responsibilities in the presbytery.

Accountability

Alleged breaches of the ethical standards will be dealt with either through counseling, admonition or the judicial process

Conclusion

This “Code of Ethics” is given as a guide for us in showing love and justice for each other. May all be encouraged to live and serve in such a manner as to promote peace and harmony in the church, and give glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.